GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:52
ANSWERED ON:27.07.2005
ASSISTANCE TO KAILASH MANSAROVAR PILGRIMS
Rijiju Shri Kiren

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of assistance being provided by the Government for the pilgrims to Kailash Mansarovar;

(b) whether the Governments of China and India have jointly formulated or propose to formulate any scheme to facilitate the visit of Kailash Mansarovar;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the present status of the scheme;

(e) whether the travelling expenses of pilgrims will decrease after the above scheme comes into operation; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE ANSWER TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 52 REGARDING ASSISTANCE TO KAILASH MANSAROVAR PILGRIMS TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.07.2005

(a) The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is presently organised by the Government under a bilateral arrangement with the Chinese Government through the Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragrh, Uttaranchal. Government pay Rupees Three thousand two hundred and fifty (Rs.3,250/-) for each pilgrim to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) for arrangements made by KMVN for the Yatra. In addition, during the course of the Yatra, facilities provided by the Government to the pilgrims include free medical assistance, security and escort cover by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) till the Lipulekh Pass on the Indian side, communication links with China, and provision of satellite phone to the Liaison Officer for each batch of pilgrims for use during emergency throughout the Yatra. A Liaison Officer is attached by the Government with each batch of pilgrims, who is responsible for their general welfare.

(b)to(d) It is Government`s endeavour to improve and upgrade facilities for the pilgrims going on the Yatra on a continuing basis. In this spirit, Government have, from time to time, also raised with the Chinese Government issues regarding the improvement of facilities on their side for the pilgrims. There has been progressive improvement over the years. In addition, Government have proposed to the Chinese side on several occasions in recent years opening of an alternative route to Kailash-Mansarovar through Demchok in Jammu and Kashmir, or Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh, which would be shorter and more convenient. The Chinese side has cited difficulty in opening these routes on the ground that it would involve travel over longer distances on their side through difficult terrain, with poor road conditions and lack of proper infrastructure for accommodation and communications.

(e)to(f)The issue of costing of the Yatra through the proposed alternative routes will arise only after an agreement could be reached with the Chinese side on these routes and specific arrangements put in place.